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Gallery and Studio

JAN VON CHELMINSKI.

THE Slav race, which has contributed much brilliant and original talent to modern art, is especially distinguished for the additions it has made to the ranks of the equestrian painters. The race is a race of horsemen, and it is only natural that the horse should hold an important place in the art of its gifted sons. With all their weaknesses of drawing and their frequent superficiality in execution, the Slav painters of to-day give us the most spirited and strikingly truthful representation of the

of name would imply) in the line of art they have made distinctive, was born at Brzostow, in Russian Poland, in 1851. In 1870 he began the study of art in Munich, with twenty-five dollars and the ill-will of his family for capital. His earnestness and his talent won for him the favor of the great battle painter, Franz Adam, and the latter, in spite of his aversion to the cares of teaching, took the young stranger under his wing. In 1873 Chelminski set up a studio for himself, and his career since then has been one of uninterrupted and growing success. His pictures have been exceptionally popular with the military and the nobility, representing, as most of

as an admirable distinctiveness of personality. His color is lively and fresh, occasionally given to the crudities which are not unknown to the painters of his race and genre, but in the main well regulated, well balanced and pleasing. Although his pictures of the chase and his smaller genres from the rococo period have won him especial popularity, his best work is in the subjects he draws from the wild life of his native land. A flight of Nihilist fugitives over the snow; the desperate defence by a party in a wrecked sledge against a pack of wolves; bits from the life of the Cossack camp and the outposts of the frontier display him in a vein of picturesqueness and



"THE CHASE." FRAGMENT OF A PICTURE BY JAN CHELMINSKI.

DRAWN FROM THE PAINTING BY THE ARTIST.

horse that we have. They present the noble brute as he lives, and if they fail in academic accuracy and the architectural quality of the sculptor, their wild coursers of the steppes, like their broken-down hacks of the posting house stables, have a vitality which disarms cold criticism. The pictures of Josef Brandt and Chelmonski, of Chelminski and Chowalski have become popular in America, and it is an item of interesting news that one of this quartet of powerful and original painters has followed his fame across the Atlantic, and found a lodgment here.

Jan Von Chelminski, an artist who ranks with Brandt and with Chelmonski (a distant relative, as the similarity

them do, the aristocratic sports of the chase and the diversions attendant thereupon. By the press of Germany he has been invariably received with high but critical praise.

Mr. Chelminski shows in his canvases a fine instinct for composition and a good eye for character and form. He is a painter of action by inclination, and has a masterly command of movement and physical expression. He draws with grace, ease and spirit, and his technique is characterized by the same readiness and absence of effort. He possesses the faculty of endowing his figures, human or brute, with a robust and healthy vitality, as well

of dramatic feeling far more satisfactory to us and creditable to him than his more decorative and conventional compositions, spirited and full of movement as these are.

At a recent exhibition of his paintings at the Lotos Club, the picture which perhaps attracted most attention was his "Flight of a Nihilist," who is driven in hot haste in a sledge drawn by three tired-out horses, preceded by a guide; both men are armed and ready to face presently the Cossacks who, seen in the distance, are apparently gaining on them. The picture is impressive and full of action. In quite a different vein were the artist's scenes in Central Park, a fragment of one of which

is shown on the first page. These are pleasant bits of genre, and should be very salable. The picture referred to, indeed, was sold as soon as it left the easel, and, oddly enough, it is to be sent to Munich, whence the painter has lately arrived. We have no American artist who can paint the horse in action so well as Chelminski, and he can be kept busy with commissions for painting favorite trotters, if he cares about such work. But it is the life of the Indians and the plainsmen in the far West which has most attracted his attention and aroused his ambition, and it is in this interesting field that we expect him to win his laurels in this country. If he does devote himself to this class of subject, the anomaly will be presented of a foreign artist, almost an entire stranger among us, and still unfamiliar with our language, painting American life and character, while our own men

of decided talent and individuality. These were Mr. Edwards's first introduction to public notice. The young artist had come from Fairhaven, Connecticut, where he was born in 1859. As a boy he evinced remarkable aptitude for drawing. The sea and its people specially received his attention, and decided the field of his maturer work which shows how readily he catches the spirit of the structural peculiarities of our quaint coast towns and fishing ports, the character of our coasting craft and of those who navigate them. His sympathy has always been with the scenes amid which his youth was spent, and, naturally, the first expression of his abilities is found in glorifying them. Soon after his arrival in New York he was employed on decorative designing, and this developed in him a taste for a class of imaginative work in which he has shown decided

Mr. Edwards in 1882 visited Belgium, Holland, and France, finally taking a studio in Paris, whence he made excursions to Normandy and Brittany. In 1883 he exhibited at The Salon "Retour de la Pêche," his largest oil painting in the present exhibition.

Among the seventy odd sketches, studies and finished pictures which fill the smaller of the new galleries in Madison Square, the water-color drawings show to the best advantage the distinguishing qualities of the artist, as the works in oil no less distinctly emphasize the present limitations of his art. Mr. Edwards is yet a young man, almost, if not entirely, self-taught, and it does not surprise us to find in his canvases much that is open to severe criticism. The strength of his art is also its weakness. If his touch is deft and his fancy airy, his execution is too often incomplete—he carries his con-



"ON THE SHORE." BY JAN CHELMINSKI.

DRAWN BY THE ARTIST FROM HIS PAINTING LATELY EXHIBITED AT THE LOTOS CLUB, NEW YORK.

seek abroad or in their studios the inspiration all nature in their own land fails to impart to them.

A. TRUMBLE.

GEORGE WHARTON EDWARDS.

THE second exhibition of the new American Art Galleries introduces the interesting work of a young painter hitherto scarcely known to New York. Mr. George Wharton Edwards has been represented at recent local exhibitions by a few pictures in water-colors and oil, and has become popular in Boston, where his paintings are in demand; but until now he has been known here rather by repute than by his handiwork.

About six years ago there appeared in some of the periodicals drawings by a fresh hand among the illustrators, which, while defective, as many of them were, and often handicapped by inadequate reproduction, yet, from their dash and their cunning, facile execution, showed plainly to the critical eye the presence of a man

ability, as will be readily admitted by the reader who remembers the charming "holiday card" designs of elfins, faeries and hobgoblins published (November, 1882) in *The Art Amateur*. There is something almost paradoxical in the singular foil the talent for such dainty work of the imagination offers to that breezy, robust talent manifested in the artist's representation of the every-day life of the weather-beaten mariner.

It is difficult to say to-day in which phase of his art—the material or the poetical—Mr. Edwards is most satisfactory. As a translator of nature he possesses a bold and correct hand, a quick and intelligent eye, and an intense feeling for the subtle harmonies of light and air no mere technical skill can achieve. In his drawings in black and white, as in his work in water-colors and in oil, this capacity for fixing or suggesting the luminosity of nature is a chief charm. He gives, too, with much truth, the rush and swirl of the surf, the long and powerful sweep of a deep sea roller, or the sluggish crawl of a Dutch canal—and all these with a rare degree of facility.

ceptions and suggestions to a certain stage of finish, and there leaves them. His color is muddy, there is little attention paid to values, and cleverness is often made to do duty in place of knowledge.

Many of Mr. Edwards's water-colors are thoroughly admirable, especially those in which his favorite grays predominate; for it is undoubtedly in monochrome that we find him at his best. It may be too soon to assume that he is denied the gift of color, but it is not too much to say that, as yet, he has shown nothing to lead us to suppose that he possesses it. In some of these drawings there is a charming out-of-door feeling. We have specially in mind a view on one of the Paris bridges on a misty winter day, which has a marvellous wetness and cool airiness about it, and a suggestion of distance, which is really masterly. No less admirable is a Paris street scene in which the mysterious indefiniteness of twilight is perfectly conveyed. One might easily single out for praise others of these drawings, especially some taken on the Dutch Coast—excellent in their truthful rendering of